
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Foreign Students Learn Logistics Data Management

By

John Zellers

Defense Logistics Information Service International Cataloging

Battle Creek, Michigan is fostering the use of multinational coalitions for peacekeeping and has given cooperative logistics a prominent role. A cornerstone for supporting such forces is the interoperability between North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and non-NATO nations through the use of a common system like the NATO Codification System (NCS) for item cataloging and stock numbering. For this reason, interest in the system continues to grow.

The NCS is the standard system for collecting information about items of supply, including the assignment of National Stock Numbers (NSNs). Its data is distributed in many forms that include Federal Logistics (FEDLOG) and the NATO Master Cross Reference List.

Over the last few years, the U.S. NATO Codification Bureau (NCB) at the Defense Logistics Information Service (DLIS) in Battle Creek, Michigan, has become the hub of training activity for nations seeking to align their logistics processes with the cataloging standard used by the United States, NATO and a growing number of nations around the world. In September 2001 the U.S. Naval Construction Brigade (NCB) completed its second annual offering of a training program, known as the Logistics Information Management Course for International Logisticians, colloquially referred to as the NCB College.

As international interest increases in this program, it is intended to be an annual event. The next training program is scheduled for September 10 through Nov. 1, 2002. In fact, early registrations have already been received from Austria, Ecuador, Estonia, Lithuania, Mexico, Slovakia, and Thailand, with three other nations pending at this point. For others such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Korea, Singapore, Lithuania, Estonia, Switzerland, Ecuador, Macedonia, Brunei, as well as NAMSA the experience has proven to be very educational and even enjoyable.

Foreign students attending the NCB College also have the chance to visit the State Capitol Building in Lansing, Michigan, as part of their courses on democracy and American culture.





Hungarian Army Lieutenant Colonel Attila Falcsik presents a gift to U.S. Marine Colonel Philip N. Yff, Defense Logistics Information Service Commander, in appreciation of DLIS' hospitality during the NATO Codification Bureau College courses that Falcsik and nine other foreign officers attended.

Students attending the NCB College receive a glimpse of what America was like during earlier times when they visit Greenfield Village near Detroit, Michigan where historic scenes have been preserved.



Ten foreign officers and civilians were among the students attending the second NATO Codification Bureau College conducted at the Defense Logistics Information Service. Shown from left to right: (Front Row) Swiss Army Lt. Col. Beat Kocherhans; Estonian Anu Kutt Head Codification Bureau, Estonia Ministry of Defence; Lithuanian Army Maj. Antanas Surkus; DLIS Deputy Richard Maison; Brunei Army 1st Warrant Officer Siti Sarawati HJ Ahamad and Korean Air Force Maj. Dong-Won Lee. (Middle Row) Korean Federal Supply Class Manager Kwang Yeong Kim, Hungarian Army Lt. Col. Attila Falcsik, Macedonian Systems Engineer Gjoko Vancov, Lynn Schmoll, deputy chief of DLIS' International Division; and Ecuadorian Navy Lt. Jorge G Saldana M. (Back Row) John Zellers, DLIS' course coordinator; Mary Lloyd, DLIS Foreign Military Sales specialist; Celia Torres, DLIS International Division member, Chris Yoder, chief of DLIS' International Division; Brian Bundy, DLIS Command Support member; and Hungarian Army Lt. Col. Tamas Dicse.

During the eight-week program, participants learn about the following areas:

- Technical rules and procedures of the National Codification System, and the standards for data elements and for data exchange;
- Major components of a national cataloging headquarters, and the various functions, which can be a part of a headquarters operation, based on the U.S. example;
- The experiences, challenges, and successes of other nations in implementing a cataloging system at a national level; and
- How to use the U.S. model to evaluate their own unique national environments, and to apply it to planning for either development of a Naval Construction Brigade or the enhancement of their existing national processes.

All these concepts are presented in three distinct areas related to the implementation of a national cataloging system: logistics applications of the NCS, the technical requirements for implementation of the system, and the internal operations and infrastructure of a bureau.

The logistics applications phase will highlight the interfaces and uses of codification data in logistics life cycle applications, emphasizing the acquisition of technical documentation used for cataloging. The technical requirement phase will highlight NCS implementation in such areas as the NATO Commercial and Governmental Entity Codes (NCAGE), the governance structure of the NCS (ACodP-1), NATO Mailbox System and U.S. data exchange, and the interface between the NCS and industry. Besides the presentation of concepts and theories in the classroom, participants will get a thorough grounding in the behind-the-scenes skills it takes to operate an NCB. In the internal operations and infrastructure phase, students will also get a chance to put into practice what they learn with practical application exercises.

As a result of this training, each nation is better equipped to evaluate current codification methods using a model NCB organization, like the United States. The possible uses of the NCS to support other logistics applications will be more easily identified, specifically as they apply to data requirements. This training will enable members of any national core study team to participate more effectively with other consulting nations under any bilateral agreements to refine codification infrastructure.

Besides the technical aspects of the program, students are given opportunities for exposure to various cross-cultural experiences available through our Information Program. Future trips are anticipated to Chicago; Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan; and Michigan State University, to name a few.

Each year we make improvements in the quality and content of the curriculum. The upcoming 2002 session will incorporate more on-the-job experience with the cataloging functions to include more practical, hands-on exercises, a broader sampling of cultural experiences and trips, and other enhancements based on suggestions from past students.

For more information on the NCS, see our web site at <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/nato/> and related links. Contact Mary Lloyd at 616-961-4310, or email: mlloyd@dlis.dla.mil, or John Zellers at 616-961-5688, email: jzellers@dlis.dla.mil, for any further information about this article. Marketing brochures are available with more information about the curriculum. Course information is also offered through the web site at <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/nato.htm>. Prospective students may use the site to watch for the latest information on the plan of instruction, course schedule, calendar of events, and registration procedures.

About the Author

John Zellers is a supply systems analyst for the NATO Cataloging Division at the Defense Logistics Information Service (DLIS). He is the program director for the NATO Codification Bureau (NCB) College, known as the Logistics Information Management Course for International Logisticians. He has twenty-four years experience in cataloging program management, to include the development of foreign military sales training programs for the U.S. Air Force and now DLIS.